

ETHICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ISSUES

3.1 Definitions:

Ethics: A discipline within philosophy concerned with the examination and establishment of criteria for making judgements concerning value (good and bad) and judgements concerning responsibility and duty (right and wrong)

Applied Ethics: Ethical reflection, as defined above, applied to a specific area of concern, e.g., the use of laboratory animals

3.2 Conceptual Framework for Making Ethical Decisions: (Robb, 1989)

A framework provides a method or formal structure for making decisions.

Utilitarian or Teleological ethical approach to decision making involves risk/benefit analysis where the best action is determined by the effects of the action in a particular circumstance or on the effects on all concerned (the social utility of the action).

It can be used by both animal-rights and animal-use advocates and it is too often based on short-term rather than long-term effects.

Deontological ethical approach to decision making determines an action by comparison with a highest duty (e.g., respect for dignity, beneficence, justice) or with a universal moral obligation derived from cultural or religious principles.

It is used primarily by animal-rights advocates and by definition by definition, ignores the short- and long-term consequences of an action. However, in actual experience, moral principles have exceptions.

3.3 Arguments Used by Those Advocating the Use of Animals for Humane Purposes: (Caplan, 1984)

Research with animals has made possible the advancement of knowledge and of the medical and veterinary sciences in ways that otherwise would not have been possible. (NRC 1988)

There are benefits from the use of animals in basic research and their use in other types of research benefits the health and welfare of both humans and animals.

Society accepts the idea of a hierarchy of species in its attitude toward other animal species

Humankind has the moral responsibility to enhance the well-being of other humans and also the

moral duty to use wisely and prudently all resources that nature provides, including the use of animals for good purposes.

3.4 Arguments Used by Animal Rights Advocates: (Singer, 1975; Regan, 1983)

Animals are intelligent and sentient beings, with feelings not too unlike our own.

Animals have inherent value and have a right to fulfill their destiny as independent beings. As independent beings, they are "subjects-of-a-life," that is, they have desires and intentions that should be respected.

Therefore, humankind has no right to exploit them for human purposes because this violates their integrity as separate species.

3.5 Role of Laws, Regulations and Policies:

They function to prescribe common standards that prevent the abuse of humane standards for the care of animals

Recent policies and guidelines have refined earlier standards and have had a salutary effect on the well-being of animals used in research, testing, and education.

3.6 Suggested Ethical Principles:

(Selected from) **U.S. Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research and Training.**

Design procedures relevant to the improvement of health, advancement of knowledge, or good of society (Principle II)

Use appropriate models and consider alternatives (Principle III)

Avoid or minimize pain and distress (Principle IV)

When painful procedures are necessary, use appropriate sedation, analgesia, or anesthesia (Principle V)

Humanely kill animals that would suffer severe or chronic pain (Principle VI)

If an exception to these principles is necessary, it should be assessed and approved by a review group such as the IACUC (Principle IX)

NOTE: Principles I, VII, and VIII are not considered to have direct ethical correlations in this context so they were not cited.

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